

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13

DHA-02 ORM-02 ACDA-07 /090 W

-----191003 110774 /20

R 190825Z FEB 77

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4381

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAHINGEN

COMIDEASTFOR

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI

CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0143

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS MILI ET

SUBJECT: FURTHER SIGNS OF DISCONTENT IN THE MILITARY

REF: ASMARA 0138 (DTG 180550Z FEB 77)

1. THE CONGEN HAS RECEIVED FURTHER REPORTS WHICH TEND TO CONFIRM THE DISSENSION IN THE ETHIOPIAN MILITARY. THE FOCUS OF THIS DISCONTENT APPEARS TO REVOLVE AROUND THE TROOPS HOSTILITY AGAINST MENGHISTU WHO IS VIEWED ESPECIALLY BY THE MILITARY GALLA ELEMENT IN THE ARMY AS THE MURDERER OF THEIR CHAMPION TEFERI BENTI. WHILE AMHARAS MAY CONSIDER MENGHISTU A GALLA AND THEREFORE INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM TEFERI BENTI, GALLAS KNOW HIM TO BE FROM THE
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WOLLAMO TRIBE, WHICH ALTHOUGH CO-LOCATED WITH GALLA GROUPS, IS BOTH CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIFFERENT.

2. AS ANOTHER INDICATION, THE SUDANESE VICE CONSUL, AHMED EL-GASIM, WHO HAS RECENTLY RETURNED TO ASMARA FROM A TWO MONTH LEAVE, COMMENTED IN AMAZEMENT ON THE HOSPITABLE RECEPTION HE HAS PERSONALLY RECEIVED FROM LOCAL EPMG OFFICIALS AND TROOPS. AHMED IS VERY

WELL KNOWN IN ASMARA BOTH BECAUSE OF HIS PHYSICAL PRESENCE (HE IS OVER 6' 4") AND HIS FLUENCY IN AMHARIC AND TIGRINYA. IN THE PAST, HE SEEMED TO HAVE BEEN SINGLED OUT FOR HARRASSMENT BY THE AIRPORT SECURITY AND GUARDS AT EPMG OFFICES. ON HIS RETURN TWO DAYS AGO, HOWEVER, HE HAS FOUND THAT, CONTRARY TO HIS APPREHENSIONS, HE WAS VERY RESPECTFULLY AND CORDIALLY RECEIVED AT THE AIRPORT AND ELSEWHERE. SHORTLY AFTER ARRIVAL, HE SENT HIS VEHICLE TO SECOND DIVISION HQ TO OBTAIN GASOLINE. HIS CHAUFFEUR REPORTED THAT, WHEN THE ENLISTED GUARDS LEARNED THAT THE CAR WAS FROM THE SUDANESE CONSULATE, THEY RESPONDED CORDIALLY SOMETHING TO THE EFFECT "MAKE WAY FOR NUMEIRI'S CAR". IN THE FACE OF REPEATED VITUPERATIVE ATTACKS POINTEDLY AIMED AT NUMEIRI IN PARTICULAR, SUCH A RESPONSE WOULD SEEM CLEARLY HERETICAL AND PROVOCATIVE.

3. REPORTS HAVE JUST REACHED ASMARA THAT THE ENLISTED MEN STATIONED IN THE GARRISON AT DECAMERE AND ADI CAIEH HAVE ARRESTED THEIR OFFICERS IN AN OBVIOUS ACT OF DEFIANCE AGAINST THE SECOND DIVISION HQ. BECAUSE OF THE ISOLATION OF THESE TOWNS FROM ASMARA, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO CONFIRM THESE REPORTS.

4. EPMG TROOPS WHO WERE TO ESCORT A SUPPLY CONVOY TO ADI UGRI, BROKE THROUGH AN INSURGENT POSITION AT SALADARO AND, HAVING DRIVEN OFF THE INSURGENTS AT DEBAROA, RETURNED TO ASMARA WITH THE WOUNDED FROM DEBAROA. DURING THEIR RETURN, THEY BURNED AND LOOTED A SMALL VILLAGE ALONG THE ROAD. ON RE-ENTERING ASMARA, HOWEVER, THEY DID NOT DISPLAY THE USUAL EXUBERANT HOSTILITY TOWARD THE ERITREAN INHABITANTS OF THE CITY. THEY WERE, IN FACT, VERY QUIESCENT AND BUSINESSLIKE IN RETURNING DIRECTLY TO THEIR BASE. THIS APPEARS TO BE SYMPTOMATIC OF A NEW RESTRAINED ATTITUDE TOWARD THE LOCAL
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POPULATION WHICH HAS BEEN NOTED BOTH IN KEREN AND IN ASMARA. THIS RESTRAINT IS VIEWED AS PART OF AN EFFORT TO MAKE AMENDS WITH THE LOCAL POPULACE IN THE EVENT THAT THE ETHIOPIAN MILITARY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EPMG DETERIORATES TO THE POINT THAT THEY ARE ISOLATED IN ERITREA.
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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 19-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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